

Town of Port Norris
New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
West of Maurice River adjacent
to County Road 553
Port Norris
Cumberland County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1163

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TOWN OF PORT NORRIS

HABS No. NJ-1163

Location: New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, West of the Maurice River, adjacent to County Road 553, Port Norris, Cumberland County, New Jersey.

Significance: Port Norris is representative of many towns in New Jersey which developed around and depended on maritime activities, including shipyards and oyster harvesting.

History: Port Norris is historically home to shipwrights and shipyards. Here were built shallps, sloops, and schooners for oystermen and fishermen in the region, as well as for use by traders based in Philadelphia and New York. New York and Philadelphia businessmen invested in Jersey-built ships and then registered them in New Jersey cities.

Shallops and sloops were common craft around the Delaware Bay and its rivers in the early colonial period, popularly used for trade. Use of these two types of ships--for oystering, fishing and trading--declined after the versatile schooner was introduced to the colonies in 1760.

The growth of the oyster industry in particular led more local shipwrights to build schooners; sloops also were dismantled and reconstructed as schooners. Between 1870 and 1935, 32 wood vessels were produced in Port Norris.

Architectural remnants of the once-flourishing oyster industry which historically included Port Norris still remain, although much workers' housing stock has been demolished.

Sources: Brown, Ruth Cook. Early Shipbuilding Particularly in South Jersey. Cumberland County Historical Society, 1961.

Rolfs, Donald H. Undersail: Dredgehoats of Delaware Bay. Woodbine: McGregor and Werner, 1971.

Sebold, Kimberly, and Sara Amy Leach. Historic Themes and Resources within the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail: Southern New Jersey and the Delaware Bay. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1991.

Project Information: This project was sponsored by the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail (NJCHT) of the National Park Service, Janet Wolf, director. The documentation was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert Kapsch, chief, under the direction of HABS historian Sara Amy Leach, project supervisor. Three historians completed the research during summer 1991: Field supervisor Sarah Allaback (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alfred Holden (University of Vermont), and Camille Gatza (North Carolina). David Ames (University of Delaware) made the large-format photographs. Historian, Elizabeth Harris May (George Washington University), edited the HABS reports.